

CONSULTING ALLIANCE: THE PRIORITY OF TEAM IMPROVEMENT



[Leadership Activities Excerpt]

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Section II: Leadership Activities



This section discusses the leadership tools (i.e. forms, surveys, and worksheets) that were featured in the Leadership Story (section I).

If you would like electronic versions of these tools for your own leadership initiatives, please visit the Consulting Alliance website.

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THE FACTS:

What is the Improvement Identification Process?

The Improvement Identification Process (IIP) is an analysis approach leaders can observe to brainstorm ideas that will enhance their teams' performance.

When should this activity be performed?

Leaders should facilitate IIP when they desire to improve their teams' performance. After leading this approach, they can implement the ideas that have resulted at a later time.

Why should this activity be performed?

A number of techniques can be observed to identify performance-improvement ideas. However, by facilitating IIP leaders can develop ideas that will address their needs and will be supported by key individuals within their organizations. This occurs because...

- IIP helps leaders identify and prioritize their performance challenges, issues, and ideas.
- Key stakeholders are engaged throughout the process which means that highly effective (and implementable) ideas are identified.

How should this activity be performed?

Leaders should review the *IIP Overview Reference* (pg. 74) to learn key qualities of the process, then review the *IIP Process Map* (pg. 74) to learn its specific steps.

MORAL OF STORY: You should lead IIP when you desire to identify improvements to existing work activities.

LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE:

'The Disorienting Orientation'

While reviewing her employee handbook, Eric Johnson, an analyst for Hole/Garris, a Seattle-based publishing firm, was approached by a vice-president.

"I've been informed that our new-hires are asking a lot of questions regarding how to navigate around the office," the V.P. states. "So, I need you to think of ways we can improve our orientation program so that our people will be more productive during their first weeks on the job."

Immediately, Johnson became anxious by the assignment - not because he had little knowledge of employee orientation issues, but because he, himself, was still disoriented after attending that very program days earlier.

Johnson, however, soon recalled an analysis approach he learned from a previous employer. The approach, called the Improvement Identification Process, could help him define his objectives, extract information from key individuals about new-hire issues, and generate a list of ideas to improve the program.

So later that month, Johnson gathered analysts from various departments and spoke, "I'm going to lead a process that will help us identify ways we can better orient our employees... But before I begin, can someone answer a question I've had for the last few weeks: *where on Earth is the supplies closet located?*"

To perform this activity, you should be skilled at:

- Organizing large amounts of information
- Communicating ideas verbally and in writing
- Leading meetings
- Thinking critically and analytically

Tips for performing this activity:

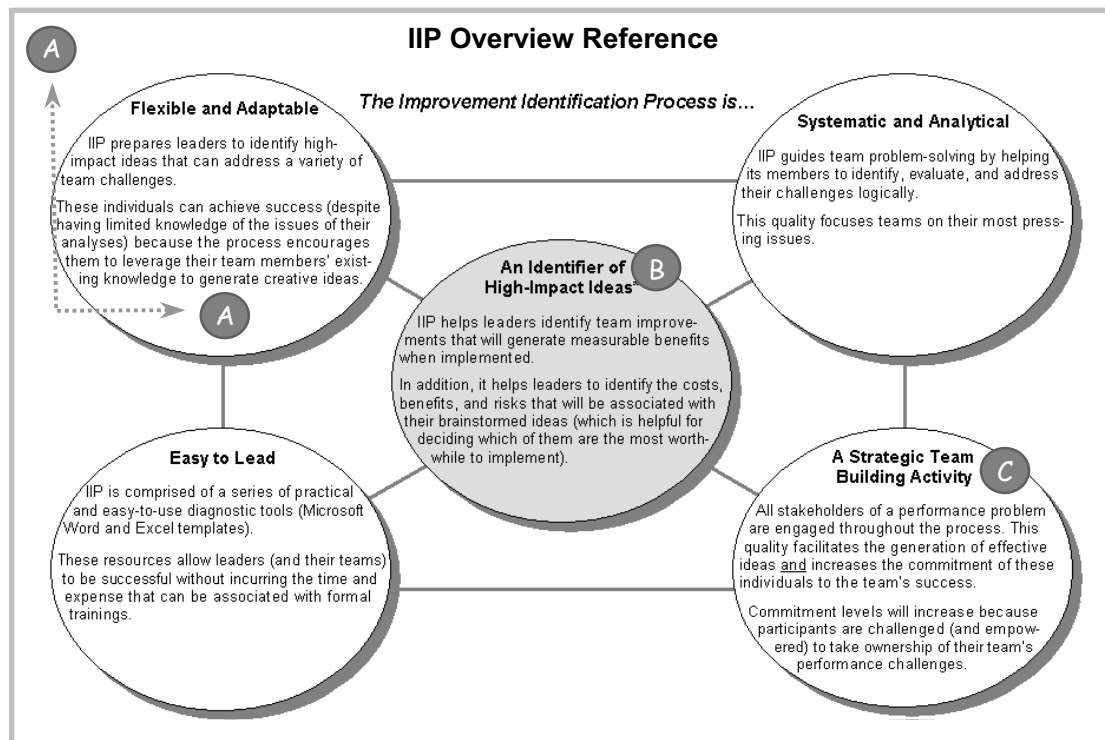
- Have a good understanding of your team/organization's goals before beginning your analysis.
- Make sure all documents related to your analysis are written specifically and objectively.
- Be critical of all information (and assumptions you make) related to the issues of your analysis.

How this activity was featured in the Leadership Story:

Two teams within Alliance needed to become more efficient. Therefore, Sam and Cassandra facilitated the Improvement Identification Process to identify performance-improvement ideas for those teams (pg. 10).

Understanding the Improvement Identification Process

The Improvement Identification Process (IIP) is a leadership approach for identifying ideas that will improve the execution of existing team work functions. See below to understand its main attributes.



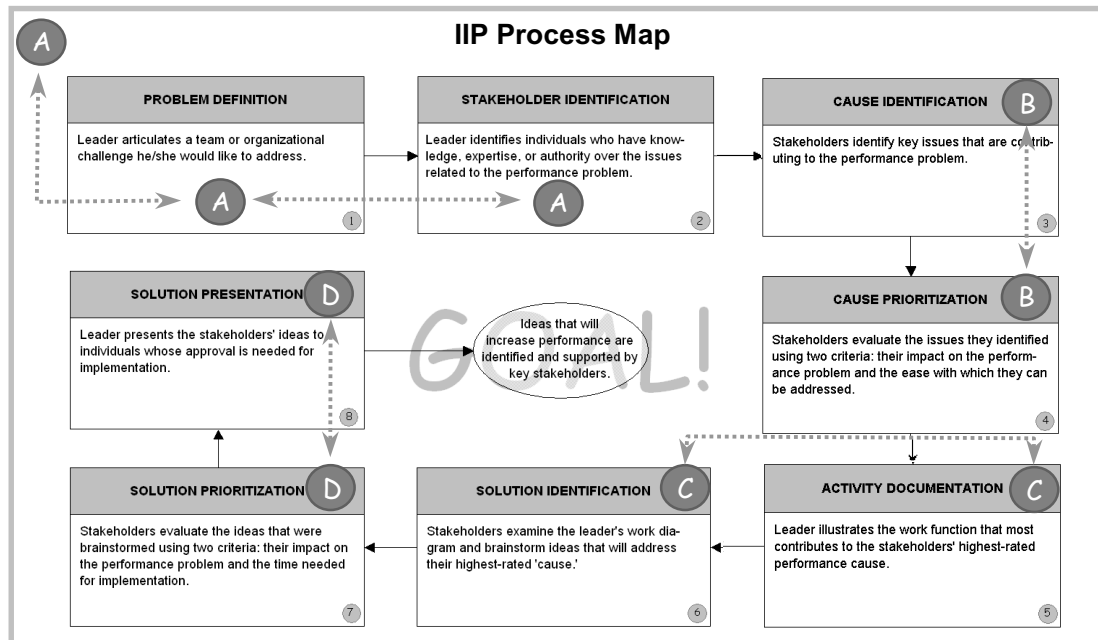
About the Improvement Identification Process (IIP)

- A** IIP helps leaders brainstorm ideas that can address a variety of **team or organizational challenges**. These ideas can be implemented after the process has been led.
- B** IIP initiatives usually yield performance-improvement ideas that generate thousands of dollars in financial returns for teams/organizations.
- C** IIP is also a **strategic team building activity** because stakeholders of the performance issue are engaged throughout the process. Because of this involvement, bonds are developed amongst team members and their dedication to high performance is elevated (because they are empowered and held accountable for their team's success).

REMINDER: YOU CAN DOWNLOAD THIS RESOURCE FROM THE CONSULTING ALLIANCE WEBSITE.

Leading the Improvement Identification Process

IIP is comprised of many advanced steps. See the illustration below for an explanation of each one.



About Leading IIP

- A** To lead IIP, you should first **articulate a team performance problem** you would like to address. Next, you will identify (and later involve) key individuals who also have a stake in that problem.
- B** Together you will identify and **evaluate the major issues** that are contributing to the problem.
- C** Next, you will **analyze the team work activity** that most contributes to the problem and brainstorm how that activity's execution can be improved to yield greater results.
- D** Finally, you will prioritize and **present your team's ideas** to key individuals whose approval is needed before those ideas can be implemented.

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